

# ‘How therapy Worked for us’

It's not just the rich and famous that have therapists. We reveal why counselling is a lifeline for women just like you...

## ‘Therapy made me accept myself for who I am’

Debbie, 30, from Hertfordshire, turned to Counselling/Therapy to help overcome her low self-esteem.

I've always suffered with bouts of depression and anxiety, but never enough to seek help. That is until I had my son, Thomas, who's now three. After I split up with his father when Thomas was two, I was at an all-time low and worried about my ability to be a good mother.

I found my Counsellor/Therapist nine months ago in a small ad, and checked out her website. She specialises in something called Psychosynthesis, which is “soul-centred” and helps you get in touch with your inner self and deal with problems by seeing how your own thoughts and interpretations have shaped them. I discovered that I'd felt very judged all my life and that I subsequently took any negative comments to heart, always beating myself up for not being good enough. I hadn't previously realised that it was my own emotions that caused me to interpret other people's words and actions so negatively.

Because of the way I was, I couldn't trust myself – I constantly questioned my ability to perform well – and I couldn't trust anyone else either, so my relationships with men were always disastrous.

Sometimes my Counsellor/Therapist, Claire, would help me go back to painful childhood memories that I'd buried so I could see how they'd frozen me in time and stopped me moving on. She didn't ask intrusive questions, but got me to talk with subtle prompts, for example, “You haven't mentioned much about your dad”. It was up to me to explore those areas when I was ready. I was seeing Claire every week for nine months and with each session my confidence grew.

I realised I had a lot of buried resentment inside me. In my family, we hadn't been allowed to show our anger, but Claire helped me release it, and doing so strengthened me as a person. I could see how repressing it had depressed me.

Understanding my anger helped me as a mum, too. I could allow Thomas to be cross, and let him know it was a normal emotion. I don't want him to end up burying feelings as I did. The sessions have made me feel more confident as a mum and as a person.

Debbie and son Thomas can now express their feelings

## Need to know

### Confidence counselling

#### WHAT DOES IT INVOLVE?

Psychosynthesis Counselling/Therapy is a holistic approach to therapy that views difficult times as opportunities to learn things about ourselves that we can then use to our advantage. A Counsellor/Therapist will see you as a whole person (not just the presenting problem), and will remind you that as well as being sad or lacking there are other, stronger facets to your character. His or her role is to help you stand back and observe yourself so you can understand that you're not identified by the negative feelings that seem to be consuming you. Counselling/Therapy sometimes includes visualisation, dream work and drawing – anything that helps you integrate the past and present aspects of your personality. The process aims to bring out your strengths so you can reach your full potential.

Another good approach for self-esteem issues is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which helps change negative thought patterns, beliefs and behaviour. It does this by focusing on the thoughts, images, beliefs and attitudes that we hold (our cognitive processes) and how these relate to the way we behave. CBT is also a good option for those with phobias and obsessive behaviour.

**HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?** These sorts of Counselling/Therapy usually cost around £50 per hour, which is what Debbie's Counsellor/Therapist, Claire Eva Pierce, charges for face-to-face or telephone sessions.

**HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?** For psychosynthesis Counselling/Therapy, Claire normally recommends a minimum course of six weekly sessions. An important advantage of CBT is that it tends to be short, taking three to six months for most emotional problems.

To find a Counsellor/Therapist in your area call 01254 875277 or visit [www.babcp.com](http://www.babcp.com). For more information about Claire Eva Pierce, call 07957 418985 or visit [www.psychotherapy-counselling.uk.com](http://www.psychotherapy-counselling.uk.com).